AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. - 17. (canceled).

18. (currently amended): The method as claimed in claim33, **characterized by** the following features:

a) a formed group of packages (10, 11), namely a testing group (18) comprising longitudinal rows and transverse rows (23) of packages (11) is checked simultaneously in the testing chamber (13) during transport,

b) each package (10, 11) is checked by an associated testing element or a sensor (28),

c) faulty or non-sealed packages (10, 11) are identified and separated out of the testing group (18),

d) in the place of the faulty the package (10, 11) separated out, an intact, sealed package (10, 11) is positioned at the same position within the testing group (18).

19. (canceled).

20. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim34, **characterized in that** the testing chamber (13) is delimited by the package conveyor (14)and the covering hood (18) which is placed on the package conveyor (14) in a sealing manner, the covering hood (18) being connected to a vacuum source (33) via a suction line (32) or a suction pipe (31).

21. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim 34, **characterized in that**, at least in a region of a conveying run (17) for accommodating the packages (10, 11), the package conveyor (14) forms a flat supporting surface for the packages (10, 11) which is pressure-loaded.

22. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim 34, **characterized in that** the covering hood (18) is movable up and down by a hood conveyor (29) and also is movable to and fro in the direction of movement of the package conveyor (14).

23. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim 22, **characterized in that** the covering hood (18) is fitted with an upright suction pipe (31) that is movable up and down on a linear drive (35) running parallel to the package conveyor (14), by means of a carriage (34) on a horizontal servo axle.

24. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that** each package (10, 11) can be registered with respect to a shape change in a region of the testing chamber (13), by means of sensors (28) arranged outside the covering hood (18), namely laser sensors operating in accordance with a triangulation principleand arranged above a translucent or clear-view upper wall (24) of the covering hood (18) corresponding to the formation of the packages (10, 11).

25. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that**, outside a region of the testing chamber (13), packages (10, 11) identified as faulty are conveyed away from the formation of the testing group (18) by a conveyor, and are replaced by a correct, intact package (10, 11) by means of a filling conveyor (78).

26. (currently amended): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that** an element delimiting the testing chamber (13), namely the package conveyor (14) and/or a lateral limit, is movable at a conveying speed of the packages (10, 11) to be tested and has air-

permeable suction regions (22) which are each assigned to a package (10, 11) and are movable past at least one suction unit (23), arranged in a fixed location, in order to produce a temporary vacuum in the testing chamber (13).

27. (withdrawn): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that** the testing chamber (13) is formed in the region of a testing channel (76), the testing channel (76) being delimited by the package conveyor (14) and by side and upper walls, and the testing chambers (13) are delimited by movable, transversely oriented dividing elements within the testing channel (76), in particular by dividing walls (51) or transverse walls (62) or intermediate walls (70) that can be moved with the package conveyor (14).

28. (withdrawn): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that** the package conveyor (14) is constructed as a rotationally driven conveying disk (43), on which the packages (10, 11) can be conveyed along part of a circle, a testing channel (76) being delimited laterally by an inner wall (49) or a circular supporting element (72), radially on the outside by a preferably stationary guide plate (50), on the upper side by a mating disk (48) or upper wall (67), and testing chambers (13) within the part-circular testing channel (76) being delimited by movable dividing walls (51) or transverse walls (62) or intermediate walls (70).

29. (withdrawn): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that** the suction unit (23), in particular a suction bell (56), is arranged in an internal space (57), and the circular inner wall (49) or the supporting element (72) of each testing chamber (13) has associated openings or suction holes (59) or suction ducts (75), which can be moved past the fixed-location suction unit (23) by means of rotation of the conveyor disk (43) or the inner wall (49) or supporting element (73).

30. (withdrawn): The device as claimed in claim 28, **characterized in that**, in order to delimit the testing chambers (13) transversely in the region of the testing channel (76), dividing walls (51) or intermediate walls (70) are designed to be pivotable, specifically are in particular connected to a pivoting shaft (52) or a rotary journal (71) that can be rotated under control, in order to move the dividing walls (51) or intermediate walls (70) in the region of the testing channel (76) from an initial position pointing approximately in the circumferential direction into a sealing transverse position.

31. (withdrawn): The device as claimed in claim 20, **characterized in that** the package conveyor (14) constructed as a belt is guided in a curve, in particular in the shape of a quarter-circle, transverse limits for a quarter-circular testing channel (76) being radially oriented transverse walls (62), which are fitted to a rotating body (64) in the manner of a star and can be introduced into the testing channel (76) one after another as a result of movement of the rotating body (64), forming testing chambers (13).

32. (withdrawn): The device as claimed in claim 31, characterized in that the testing channel (76) is delimited by the curved, in particular quarter-circular, package conveyor (14) having suction regions (22), by an inner surface (65) of the rotating body (64), by an external, stationary guide plate (50) and on the upper side by an upper wall (67) preferably connected to the rotating body (64).

33. (new): A method for testing the integrity of packages, formed as closed hollow bodies having air inside the same, by means of vacuum, the packages (10, 11) being transported continuously along a conveying path, and, during a transport section, the packages (10, 11) being accommodated in a testing chamber (13) running along with the packages (10, 11) or with a group of the same to be tested, and the testing chamber (13) having a vacuum applied to it in a

region of a defined testing section or testing station, and the testing chamber (13) being sealed off on all sides, in conjunction with a package conveyor (14), and any deformations of the packages (10, 11) being scanned in the testing chamber (13) and/or after leaving the same, **characterized in that** the package conveyor (14), configured as a plate conveyor, has dimensionally stable plates (27), which form a continuous plate plane as a support for the packages and a sealing element, namely a covering hood (19), and the sealing element for sealing being positioned on the package conveyor (14) in such a manner that transversely oriented side walls (25) and transverse webs (26) of the sealing element rest on the package conveyor (14) in a region of joints (30) between the plates (27) for sealing off the joints (30).

34. (new): A device for testing the integrity of packages formed as closed hollow bodies having air inside the same in a testing chamber (13) having a vacuum applied to it, the packages (10, 11) having a vacuum applied to them during their continuous transport in the testing chamber (13) running along with the packages (10, 11) in a direction of transport, and the packages (10, 11) being arranged on a package conveyor (14) and transportable by the latter along a testing section or a testing station, and in a region of the testing section or testing station, there is moved into a testing position at least one sealing element which, in conjunction with the package conveyor (14) and/or further limits, forms the closed testing chamber (13), the testing chamber (13) having a vacuum applied to it for some time, specifically in a region of the testing section or testing station, and the packages (10, 11) are checked, either within the testing chamber (13) or after leaving the same, by sensors (28) with respect to correct formation, **characterized in that** the package conveyor (14) is configured as a plate conveyor with dimensionally stable plates (27), which form a continuous plate plane as a support for the packages and the sealing element, namely a covering hood (19), and the sealing element being

positioned on the package conveyor (14) in such a manner that transversely oriented side walls (25) and transverse webs (26) of the sealing element rest on the package conveyor (14) in a region of joints (30) between the plates (27) for sealing off the joints (30).